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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 000736

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR LLUFTIG AND L/PM TMITCHELL
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [EAID](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES ARTICLE 98 WITH NEW FOREIGN
MINISTER TO NO IMMEDIATE REACTION

1. (U) During a November 10 meeting with Suriname's recently installed Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Lygia Kraag-Keteldijk, the Ambassador emphasized the USG's ongoing desire to sign an Article 98 agreement with Suriname, clarified possible points of misunderstanding, and provided sample agreements. The Minister appeared familiar with the subject, but gave no immediate indication as to what the Government of Suriname's (GOS) intentions are.

2. (C) In a follow-up conversation on November 14, a MFA official with responsibility for legal affairs at the Americas desk told POLOFF that before making a decision on signing an Article 98 agreement, the GOS would first decide on whether to join the ICC. He expects internal GOS discussions on subscribing to the ICC to intensify early next year after the conclusion of upcoming parliamentary budget deliberations. The official gave his personal opinion that if the GOS decides to join the ICC, his government would have little problem with signing an Article 98 agreement with the U.S. afterwards.

3. (C) COMMENT: The Americas' desk official is not in a decision-making position, and his personal opinions should be taken as just that. However, his opinion suggests that at least some within the MFA believe signing an Article 98 agreement is not at odds with the Rome Treaty, despite European Union attempts to convince the GOS otherwise. Post will continue to emphasize that signing an Article 98 agreement independent of action on the ICC removes possible perception that the Article 98 decision was taken under pressure. The suggestion that no decision on the ICC or Article 98 until next year is typical of GOS practice of postponing difficult decisions for as long as possible.

Barnes

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